

USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

**Twenty-First Century Europe: Emergence of Baltic States into
European Alliances**

by

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The views expressed in this academic research paper are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the U.S. Government, the Department of Defense, or any of its agencies.

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ABSTRACT

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The contributions of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania ("the Baltic States") to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the European Union (EU) and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), upon completing their membership obligations will enhance stability and security within the European continent. The U.S. has a unique relationship with the Baltic countries and wants continued stability in the northeastern region of Europe. Baltic membership in these organizations should enable the U.S. to maintain its influence in Europe. Baltic allies may contribute significantly to the current war on terrorism. Likewise, Baltic nations will benefit from alliances with more developed, wealthier nations. Effective alliances should offer advantages to all parties joined by them.

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TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY EUROPE: EMERGENCE OF THE BALTIC STATES INTO EUROPEAN ALLIANCES

BACKGROUND

Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania are often referred to collectively as the Baltic States. Geographically located between Russia and the Baltic Sea, their immediate bordering countries are Russia, Belarus, and Poland. Germany, Denmark, Sweden, Finland, and Norway also border the Baltic Sea. This SRP examines the Baltic States 21st century emergence into NATO and other European organizations. Specifically the Baltic States' participation in current NATO programs will be discussed. The European Union (EU) and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) also play an important role in influencing both political and economic growth of all three countries. Military cooperation among the Baltic countries has allowed each of them to build a small military force from scratch. Economically, each country has had different growth periods; however, all are progressing toward free market economies. Politically, the Baltic States have adopted Western style democracies.

After World War II the U. S. government did not recognize the incorporation of the Baltic States into the former Soviet Union. In 1991 with the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Baltic States regained their independence. As newly independent states, they began to develop political institutions and military infrastructure. The Baltic States have now sought membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the European Union (EU), and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). "Indeed the Baltic Sea region has become one of the most dynamic areas in all of Europe, where creative political leadership, an ethos of cooperation, the willing embrace of new technologies, and strong economic policies have come together to great effect."¹

During the 1990s the Baltic States realized that regional cooperation would enhance their pursuit of membership in Western institutions like NATO and the EU.² Given their shared experience as unwilling members of the Soviet Union, they were well-prepared to cooperate in matters of defense and economic growth. Politically, they are progressing toward becoming more democratic nations. Regional cooperation within the Baltic States extends well beyond their borders to include other European countries, such as Russia and Belarus. "The dual approach of EU and NATO enlargement has had the most positive effect on stabilizing and democratizing the former Warsaw Pact countries, each of which could have easily reverted to its former balance of power security formula."³

The U.S. affirmed its new relationship with the Baltic States by signing a Baltic Charter of Partnership in January 1998: "The Baltic Charter solidified the international relationship between the U.S. and Baltic nations by defining the political, economic and security relations between our countries."⁴ Through this charter, the US has recognized the contributions of the Baltic States through their participation in Partnership for Peace (PFP), which will be discussed later. "Even as they are reconnecting themselves with the West, the Baltic Nations are also reaching out to the East."⁵ Such cooperative efforts throughout the Baltic region with both NATO and EU countries could lead to their future political influence within both organizations.

The Baltic States have political connections to the U.S. through the Baltic charter and historical ties through the U.S. Baltic immigrant citizens. Membership in NATO and the EU should positively affect the Baltic political situation as they move toward democracy. The OSCE is also dedicated to promoting democracy throughout Europe.

The political and military environment is democratically conceived within each Baltic country. Their democracy is based on a separation of political leadership from their ministries of defense. As in all democracies, politics do influence the military. A build-up of their military forces was a priority upon gaining independence to discourage intervention from the former Soviet regime.

Security of each Baltic country was their primary concern as they began to develop economically. This growth occurred both individually and collectively, with regional cooperation between them and other Baltic Sea Region countries. All have moved away from state control of industry and business, toward privatization. Estonia has been the most successful. All three countries are now members of the World Trade Organization (WTO). During the 1999 Russian economic collapse, Lithuania's economy was severely impacted and is only now beginning to grow. "Foreign direct investment (FDI) plays an important role in the economic reform strategies of the three countries. FDI not only brings capital, management expertise and perhaps marketing channels. It is also the clearest indication of the trust and commitment of international finance to the reform progress of the three states."⁶ Continued economic progress in the Baltic region has enabled these new nations to obtain considerable economic growth and stability.

Both NATO and the EU require economic stability for membership. NATO requires members to spend 2% of their GNP on defense. As we have seen, all three Baltic countries are willing to meet this requirement. Once they become part of the EU, each candidate country must join the Exchange Rate Mechanism (ERMII) in order to adopt the Euro as its primary

currency.⁷ The stronger their own currencies are prior to adopting the Euro, the easier it will be to maintain economic consistencies at the time of adopting the Euro.

“The Baltic Sea Region is the fastest growing business region in Europe. The trade flows between countries in the region increased by more than 30% annually between 1993 and 1998.”⁸ The Baltic Sea Region has a combined population of approximately 90 million people from the following countries: Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Norway, Germany, Poland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Russia. Among these, approximately eight million live in the Baltic States.⁹ Finland’s port of Helsinki is a sister port to that of Tallinn, Estonia, both of which benefit from tourism between the two countries.

“The economic relationship between the Baltics and the U.S. has also been enhanced through the Baltic Charter....Since the signing of the Charter; our Baltic partners have made substantial progress in implementing economic reform and development.”¹⁰ The economic growth of the Baltic States is market-oriented; it focuses on free trade with their bordering countries. Even as they are evolving and moving further away from dependence on the Soviet regime as a primary source of revenue, they are reaching back toward Russia to assist her in establishing ties with the West. When the Baltic countries were part of the Soviet regime, they were the able to generate more revenues than the other former Soviet republics. “In the Soviet era the three Baltic States not only had the highest average income among Soviet republics; they also had the lowest degree of inequality.”¹¹

In one of the first unified business ventures, the Baltic States, along with Russia and Belarus, jointly agreed to unify their electric system. Originally the power system was designed to be part of the Soviet Union’s northwest unified energy system. When they first achieved independence, each country disconnected from the power grid to form their own. However, between 1999 and 2001 all five countries signed a multi-lateral agreement to transmit electricity, including links with Poland and other markets. “BALTREL, the Baltic countries’ power cooperation organization, also has proposed supplying Sweden and Finland with power generated in the Baltic States.”¹²

BALTREL is one of the Baltic States’ success stories of energy cooperation. However, each country has other individual sources of power supply. Estonia is the only country in the world where oil shale is the primary source of energy, supplying over 75 percent of its total energy supply.¹³ Latvia is dependant on imports for its energy but recently announced a willingness to allow oil exploration in its territorial waters. Lithuania is more dependent on nuclear power than any other country. It may have to make future adjustments concerning its

nuclear energy sources. "Relations with Russia still affect much of Lithuania's activities and, like Estonia and Latvia, the country remains heavily reliant on Russia for oil and gas supplies.¹⁴

Geographically, the three Baltic countries lie between Russia and the Baltic Sea, Russia's primary avenue for exporting oil to other nations. It remains to be seen whether mutually beneficial trade agreements can enhance the economies of all related countries in the Baltic Sea area with Russia. The Baltic States' economic relationship with Russia may alleviate some of their fears regarding other aspects of the Baltic-Russia relationships.

NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION

NATO was established in April 1949, allying 12 signatory countries. The United States has been a member since its formation, supporting its continual growth and expansion. Currently, 19 countries are members of NATO. At the NATO summit in November 2002, all three Baltic countries were among the seven (the others were Slovenia, Slovakia, Bulgaria and Romania) invited to join the Alliance. President Bush's September 2002 U.S. National Security Strategy (NSS) reiterates support of NATO enlargement for democratic countries willing to share the burden for defending and advancing our common interests. "We will sustain a common perspective on the threats to our societies and improve our ability to take action in defense of our nations and their interests."¹⁵

The historic adversarial relationship between NATO and the Soviet Union may have motivated the Baltic States to join NATO. The Baltic countries sought membership in NATO primarily because it is a collective defense alliance, tied together by common values. Article Five of the NATO Charter provides for the individual or collective defense of any member when any member is attacked.¹⁶ NATO will respond jointly to an attack on any of its members. The Baltic States viewed this collective defense as a way to prevent the Russia from re-occupying their sovereign territory. Collective defense offers protection of a member's borders. On the other hand, collective security usually supports peace-keeping operations.¹⁷

One of the U.S. policy objectives for supporting NATO enlargement is to maintain U.S. influence in the European continent. A basic premise of U.S. policy assumes that NATO enlargement increases the U.S. influence within the European community. The Alliance "remains the primary vehicle for keeping the U.S. engaged in European security affairs."¹⁸ NATO continues to adjust and adapt to on-going world events, offering assurance that it will support Article five actions outside of Europe. For example, in the current Iraqi crisis the U.S. interests have benefited significantly by NATO enlargement since the new members of the Alliance support the U.S. position. The Prague Summit Declaration, issued by heads of state

participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Prague on 21 November 2002, reiterated their commitment to the transatlantic relationship: "We are steadfast in our commitment to the transatlantic link; to NATO's fundamental security tasks including collective defense; to our shared democratic values, and to the United Nations Charter."¹⁹ On 23 May 2002 at a speech before the German Bundestage in Berlin, President Bush declared: "NATO's defining purpose--our collective defense--is as urgent as ever. America and Europe need each other to fight and win the war against global terror."²⁰ Perhaps the most important current rationale for supporting enlargement is that the U.S. gains more allies in the current global war on terrorism.

NATO contributes vitally to building consensus throughout the European community. General Wesley Clark, former Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR), referring to the Kosovo campaign observed: "NATO not only generated consensus, it also generated an incredible capacity to alter public perceptions, enabling countries with even minimal capacities to participate collectively in the war."²¹ The Baltic States' membership in NATO may allow them to collectively influence other NATO countries, as well as non-NATO countries, to join in security and economic regional partnerships with any one or all of them.

NATO established Membership Action Plans (MAP) in April 1999 to assist three new NATO countries (Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic) and other aspirants to develop structured military planning goals that would eventually contribute to the NATO Alliance. All three Baltic countries have actively worked to achieve their MAP goals, completing both the military cooperation and consensus-building chapters of their MAP process.²² They continue to work on their other MAP chapters.

However, the expansion of NATO has drawn some criticism. Foreign Policy in Focus (FPIF), A Think Tank without Walls, in its December 2000 issue reports that "it is time to abolish NATO as an expensive cold war relic."²³ FPIF interprets NSS policy as unilateral, ignoring the ability of institutions such as NATO to achieve global consensus. However, during the 2002 U.S. Presidential election campaign, both Presidential candidates George W. Bush and Vice-President Al Gore stressed that NATO enlargement offered a way to maintain U.S. influence in Europe.²⁴ Although he previously opposed more than one admission, Senator Biden, (Delaware, the top Democrat on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee) now supports NATO membership for all seven aspirants. He changed his view after seeing how quickly some of the aspirant members responded with many forms of assistance after the terrorist attacks on 11 September 2001. He now supports the Bush Administration's view as stated by Deputy

Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz: "The war on terrorism has underscored that NATO is not obsolete but essential."²⁵

A stable European continent is very much a U.S. interest. Since the global war on terrorism appears to have no clear exit strategy, long-term relationships with European organizations supporting the U.S. position may become more important. Ambassador Przemyslaw Grudzinski, the Polish Ambassador to the U.S., declared:

Regarding politics, first I just want to repeat that despite the perception of growing divergences in interests among members of NATO, what makes the transatlantic relationship so strong and special is a deeply rooted commitment to the same fundamental values, including freedom, democracy and respect for human rights.²⁶

These are U.S. interests as well as European interests. Since the Baltics have taken up western idealism, their goal is also continued regional stability.

NATO's involvement with Russia has undergone revolutionary changes since the end of the Cold War. The Soviet Union, as the leading member of the Warsaw Pact, was NATO's most formidable foe. In the matter of Baltic security, Russia must still be considered. "A stronger NATO-Russia partnership would complement NATO's other efforts over the past decade to extend security and stability across the entire Euro-Atlantic area through cooperation and integration in the political and military spheres."²⁷ Russia's role since the collapse of the Berlin Wall is an important security component of Euro-Atlantic relationships. The NATO-Russia Founding Act was signed at the May 1997 summit meeting between Russian President Yeltsin and the 16 NATO countries at the Elyse Palace in Paris. Within its framework, "NATO and Russia have committed themselves to developing their relations on common interests, reciprocity and transparency."²⁸ The long-term goal achieved by cooperative security arrangements is to establish a stable-secure Euro-Atlantic partnership based on democratic idealism. Russia has contributed significantly to NATO's continuing peacekeeping efforts in the Balkans and in other efforts to dissuade parties that would offer haven to terrorists. However, Russia retains its ability to act alone in situations it believes may threaten its own sovereignty.

Now that NATO will increase to 26 members, the politics of achieving consensus making will be more difficult. This may irritate U.S. politicians who wish prefer rapid decision-making. Even so, U.S. support of NATO membership for Baltic countries should prove to be a positive influence, especially when they vote on issues that are favorable to U.S. interests. As the Baltics become stronger democratic nations, they may more closely align themselves with Western idealism. "Acknowledging that NATO is the anchor of American engagement in Europe, the National Security Strategy states that the Alliance is instrumental in helping to

'build' on integrated, peaceful, democratic and prosperous Europe.²⁹ NATO encourages democratic political reform, which is also a requirement for EU membership. Toward this goal, NATO and the EU need to cooperate more to create a stronger Europe that can be an effective ally in the war on terrorism.

The Baltic countries are among the former Warsaw Pact members that were left without any military resources upon the withdrawal of the Soviet Armed Forces. They have thus built their military forces from scratch, to include manning their forces with qualified officers and non-commissioned officers, as well as training and equipping them.³⁰ In their early years of independence, building a military force was seen as a way of protecting themselves from a possible Russian invasion. "The Baltic states' defense policies have been tailored with the lessons of NATO's experience in mind and fully take into account the provisions of NATO's Membership Action Plan on upgrading local armed forces to meet NATO standards and compatibility."³¹ At the beginning of their military restructuring, foreign military assistance came from the Nordic countries, France, Germany, the United Kingdom, and the U.S.³²

The U.S. Headquarters European Command's (USEUCOM) peacetime engagement programs include Partnership-for Peace (PFP) and the Joint Contact Team Program (JCTP) supported by the National Guard State Partnership Program (SPP). These military assistance programs contributed to development of the new Baltic military forces. All three countries have contributed to NATO activities through their PFP programs, designed to promote military cooperation between NATO and non-NATO countries. Instituted in 1994, PFP activities enable the Alliance to cooperate militarily and increase interoperability through peacetime exercises with both NATO and non-alliance countries. NATO "remains an essential tool with which the United States and its most important allies can coordinate their militaries, promote the unification of Europe, maintain peace in the Balkans, and quite possibly fight major military operations anywhere in the world."³³ PFP also enhance a country's ability to meet the metrics laid out in its MAP.

MAP, along with PFP activities that include U.S. military forces, supports the objective of maintaining U.S. prominence in Europe. NATO plays a considerable role in maintaining a balance between ends, ways and means through its ability to influence members and non-members. NATO indeed enables the U.S. to achieve policy objective (U.S. prominence), while providing both the ways (PFP and MAP) and some of the means (allied support) to gain such objectives.

Established in 1993, JCTP supports USEUCOM's peacetime engagement goals: stability, democratization, military professionalism, and closer relations with NATO. Through the Country

Work Plan (CWP), JCTP supports USEUCOM's theater/strategic objectives of promoting stability and thwarting aggression throughout the USEUCOM Area of Responsibility. The CWP uses U.S. military resources to enhance U.S. access and influence, while supporting U.S. peacetime activities within a host country. The CWP focuses and coordinates all JCTP activities in the host country. The Baltic countries were part of JCTP from its onset. Each country has a Military Liaison Team (MLT) stationed in its capital city, with an initial team size of four. Currently each team has three members, since the majority of the program's original goals have been achieved. The MLT works with members of the Ministry of National Defense and the Defense Staff to assist in supporting USEUCOM's goals.

Each of the countries participating in these programs has been partnered with a U.S. State National Guard force. SPP "marries" an individual state guard with a country participating in PFP:

The SPP was established following the National Guard Bureau's (NGB) proposal in the spring of 1993 to pair National Guard States with the Baltic countries of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. The NGB proposal was prompted by CINCEUR's Jan 93 decision to staff the MLTs in the Baltic States with Reserve Component personnel, to avoid sending a provocative signal to the Russian Federation that might have been caused by assigning active duty soldiers. The SPP thus began as a bilateral military-to-military contact program with which to engage countries of Central and Eastern Europe, and is a direct outgrowth of U.S. European Command's (USEUCOM's) Joint Contact Team Program (JCTP).³⁴

The following partnerships are now working: Estonia with the Maryland National Guard, Latvia with the Michigan National Guard and Lithuania with the Pennsylvania National Guard. Interestingly, Lithuania's Chief of Defence (CHOD) BG John Kronkaitis is a former U.S. Army officer who retired after 27 years of military service. The Vice Minister of National Defence, MG Kilikauskas is also a former U.S. Air Force officer who retired after 37 years of military service. Both men were born in Lithuania. MG Kilikauskas and his entire family fled from Lithuania just prior to the Soviet occupation in 1944 and later settled in the U.S.

The Baltic States actively participated in the PFP program; they have also provided joint peacekeeping forces to on-going operations in SFOR/KFOR. Congressman John Shimkus, 20th District of Illinois, informs the Honorable Mr. Hyde, Chairman, House International Relations Committee:

Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia have all sent troops to assist the European peacekeeping efforts under NATO, the United Nations, and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, as well as essential linguistic support for the current campaign against terrorism. Despite their modest budgets and tremendous social needs, each country has committed itself to spending 2% of

its GDP on military preparations in compliance with the Membership Action Plan (MAP).³⁵

This willingness to spend 2% of their GDP on defense is a goal that is not often met by other members of NATO. Approximately half of NATO's current members fail to meet established goals and seem to be incapable of meeting their required obligations.³⁶ The three countries have also joined in regional cooperation to improve their military capabilities. The total of military members (soldiers, reservists and conscripts) is approximately 17,000. A conscript has only a twelve month service obligation. "Conscription limits the force size a country can deploy to a crises area. Many countries with conscription cannot legally deploy their conscripts out-of-area."³⁷ The Baltic countries recognized early on that it would be mutually beneficial for them to work jointly. Since 1994, the Baltic States, supported by Western and neighboring countries have implemented joint defense projects, "forming a peacekeeping battalion, a naval squadron, and a regional air surveillance network."³⁸ These projects are continuously monitored by the Baltic Security Assistance Management Group (BALTSEA), the overall coordinating group for all these projects. Its members include Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Russia, and Sweden.

Along with the above-mentioned programs, the BALTSEA countries have assisted the Baltic States in learning about western military culture, in using borrowed NATO-compatible equipment, and in providing training on how NATO operates within its sphere of influence.³⁹ The BALTSEA countries provide further training and deploy limited numbers of the Baltic peacekeeping battalion.

Further, a regional peacekeeping force supported by the Nordic countries, Great Britain and the U.S. includes the Baltic Battalion (BALTBAT). Elements of the battalion have been deployed as part of peacekeeping forces, but they perform other tasks as well. The Lithuania portion of BALTBAT closely cooperates with Danish forces. This year, the Lithuanian (LITBAT) portion of the battalion expects to be fully interoperable with NATO.⁴⁰ During this year's NATO Summit, the U.S. stressed that NATO needs to transform for the future, suggesting that members develop the capability to provide various "niche" skills for the war on terrorism. Also, the U.S. recommended that NATO develop the capability to rapidly deploy a force when necessary, to include the ability to "backfill" either the U.S. or other NATO forces when they leave places like Bosnia to go to other places like Afghanistan.⁴¹ Although BALTBAT is a small force, it is able to integrate into many regional forces as it trains with other PFP member states. BALTBAT is rapidly developing its capabilities and will prove to be an excellent addition to NATO forces.

Two other current Baltic projects are BALTNET and BALTRON. BALTNET uses national nodes and communication lines to provide a Regional Air Surveillance and Coordination Center (RASCC). "National Air Surveillance radars in the Baltic countries are linked to the system to produce a single, approved picture of the air activity over the Baltic countries."⁴² BALTNET will eventually provide for the air defense of their region. BALTNET will also be capable of establishing the air defense for the Baltic Region for both the EU and NATO, without the problem of increasing the number of troops necessary to support its operation. An area of possible concern today is what information can be disseminated to the EU, NATO or both organizations. BALTNET utilizes both civilian and military authorities in the field of air traffic control and represents a spirit of international cooperation within the Baltic region. "Radar data provided to BALTNET remain national property of the providing state, but BALTNET assets can be used for an exchange of air picture with NATO and/or individual countries."⁴³

As it becomes operationally capable of providing radar surveillance and aerial data, BALTNET will contribute significantly to security in the Baltic Sea region. The Alliance as a whole should continue to provide support and advice on how to develop similar defense structures, such as intelligence gathering assets. Collection, processing and dissemination of intelligence should be formalized between both organizations as NATO and the EU continue to collaborate on security issues.⁴⁴

BALTRON provides naval ships that meet NATO requirements for mine-counter measure (MCM) vessels from each of the Baltic countries. "It aimed at creating a trilateral squadron of mine-counter measure (MCM) vessels, which would include from 3 to 6 ships able to perform a range of tasks, the central of which were to counter the residual mine threat on the Eastern coast of the Baltic sea and with the development of capabilities, to be able to assume the whole range of mine clearance tasks."⁴⁵ BALTRON is being trained by German forces in mine-clearing tasks to increase their capabilities in this endeavor. BALTRON will enable the Baltic States to provide this maritime support to peacekeeping operations, conducted by either NATO or the EU, especially Humanitarian Assistance operations.⁴⁶ Significantly, neither NATO nor the EU has a standing Naval force; BALTRON vessels would be an excellent addition any NATO or EU –led peacekeeping operation.

In order for the military to achieve and maintain a secure environment within each Baltic country stronger economies need to be developed. As the Baltic's progress from government controlled markets to a free-market economy based on trade within the regions their economies have grown stronger. This economic strength should positively influence further economic growth in the region; it includes economic trade agreements with Russia.

EUROPEAN UNION

Not only are the Baltics striving for membership into NATO, they are also simultaneously striving for membership in the European Union (EU), which has its own criteria for membership. The EU requires applicant countries to agree to extensive legal, regulatory, and financial stipulations of the *acquis communautaire*, thus supporting the goal of affluence, integration, prosperity and the good life which Central East European countries are seeking.⁴⁷ Striving toward membership in the EU influenced their political evolution upon independence, ensuring they would focus toward becoming democracies. Since the Baltic countries will join both the EU and NATO their ability to move other European countries toward democracy and Western influence may enable the U.S. to develop a positive relationship with the EU itself.

Following the enlargement of NATO in November 2002, the EU decided in December 2002 at Copenhagen to add ten new members by 2004. This dual-enlargement will include eight EU and NATO countries with overlapping memberships in both organizations. These countries are Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Slovakia, and Slovenia.⁴⁸ Although the U.S. does not belong to the EU, through its NATO membership it has the opportunity to influence the countries that are members of both organizations. "America will insist that NATO's primacy be maintained in accordance with the European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP) declaration that EU defense forces will be used where the United States does not wish to be engaged."⁴⁹ The U.S. continues to view this as a positive development in the European security environment.

While meeting membership requirements for the EU the Baltic States have addressed their minority populations of Russian descendants; they have been largely influenced by the percentage of these descendants in their countries. In Lithuania, only six percent of its 20 percent minority population is Russian. By contrast, in Latvia 30 percent of its 43 percent minority population is Russian.⁵⁰ In Estonia 28 percent of its total population is Russian.⁵¹ "The citizenship issue is the key to understanding the peculiarity of the minority problem in the Baltics."⁵² Attitudes toward these Russian minorities reflect the historical treatment of these countries during the 1940s until they won their independence. "Annexation in 1940 by the USSR and drastic changes in the demographic situation caused by large-scale immigration after the World War II caused fears of 'ethnic extinction' among the titular groups and thus strengthened nationalist emotions."⁵³ In Latvia and especially in Estonia, granting citizenship rights to Russians is seen as a threat to their new way of life. Both Estonia and Latvia will continue to develop language programs as part of their citizenship process, since only people speaking the state language have rights to assistance from state programs. Integration of their

minority populations continues to be one of the greatest challenges facing Estonia and Latvia as they reach their goal of EU membership.⁵⁴

The full integration of the Baltic States into the EU does pose some risk for the U.S., particularly to the European Security and Defense Identity (ESDI).

European Security and Defense Identity (ESDI) was always a NATO military project, essentially designed to solve a number of structural and political problems within the Euro-Atlantic community. European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP), on the other hand, is a part of Europe's idea of a common defense. One of the European Union's goals is to develop a Common Foreign and Security Policy. This aim includes the progressive framing of a common defense policy. ESDP is therefore an EU political project and goes much further than ESDI in positioning not only the necessity but also the legitimacy of some relatively autonomous measure of European security policy.⁵⁵

Since ESDP was recently approved, it has not been necessary for the Petersberg Tasks to expand into the realm of combating terrorism. The Petersberg Tasks were originally adopted by the Western European Union in 1992 as a series of peacekeeping tasks. Then in 1996, the EU agreed to further tasks--"search and rescue missions, peacekeeping missions, peace enforcement missions and tasks of combat forces in crises management situations."⁵⁶ These tasks were finally approved by all EU members and began implementation in 1999. They are also part of the military role of ESDP in its expanding role in crisis management throughout Europe. This expansion includes possible roles in Africa. ESDP forces should concentrate their efforts to respond quickly and effectively to crises as they emerge.⁵⁷

From a U.S. perspective, it is increasingly important that the EU and NATO do not duplicate missions. The EU must be able to communicate effectively with NATO during crises in order to benefit from NATO's military planning capacity. "A joint declaration adopted by the EU and NATO on 16 December (2002) has opened the way for closer political and military cooperation between the two organizations."⁵⁸

Additionally, the EU's new 60,000 troop Rapid Reaction Force has generated a great deal of controversy as a possible duplication of NATO capabilities provided by the NATO Reaction Force (NRF).⁵⁹ "The EU's recent commitment to setting up a Rapid Reaction Force and the establishment of new permanent military bodies within its institutions are the clearest signs yet that a European defense identity is in the making."⁶⁰ This force would be capable of carrying out such missions as those described above within ten days of notification and operate for periods up to a year. Countries that belong to both the EU and NATO may be justifiably concerned about their ability to provide forces to both organizations. These concerns include the cost of building and training these forces, as well as maintaining a larger than anticipated number of

personnel. Much of this will depend on how much the EU is willing to spend for its members' defense capabilities. "For the countries concerned, these efforts and those deployed as part of NATO's Defense Capabilities Initiative (DCI) will be mutually reinforcing."⁶¹ The EU's forces are taking over the United Nation's police missions in Bosnia at the end of 2002.⁶² These forces in the past have included the Baltic peacekeeping battalion, just completing its third rotation in SFOR.⁶³

In testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Secretary of State Colin L. Powell referred to President Bush's welcoming the EU's role in providing for security in Europe as long as it is integrated with NATO: "The union and the alliance must not travel separate roads for their destinies are entwined."⁶⁴ The EU is preparing to provide common security for all its members. As it grows, it will need NATO's experience and guidance to maintain European security and stability.

ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE (OSCE)

NATO's ability to influence is supported by its relationship with OSCE, another organization that has influenced policies in the Baltic States. OSCE has 55 member states from Europe, Central Asia, and North America. The OSCE "helped to end civil war in Tajikistan, has constrained conflict in Macedonia, Moldova, and Georgia and has played a major role in building civil society in post-conflict Bosnia and Kosovo."⁶⁵ The OSCE also plays a political role in the Baltic States because of its dedication to promoting democratic institutions and fundamental human rights for all. Since not all Russian citizens left the Baltic countries when the Soviet regime collapsed and withdrew its troops in 1991, their rights as inhabitants of the three countries have raised tricky questions. The minority rights of all citizens are a key issue for accession into organizations such as OSCE, NATO and the EU. Close cooperation between the OSCE and NATO has been increasing; since 1996 there has been an expanding process of political interaction and cooperation between both organizations.⁶⁶

OSCE is the largest regional security cooperation in the world. Along with NATO, it is vital to U.S. engagement activities with Europe.⁶⁷ OSCE's global membership could contribute significantly to the war on terrorism. "OSCE, the most pervasive organization in Europe, is an excellent one for laying the foundation of security and confidence among its members."⁶⁸ OSCE is able to enhance the consensus-building ability of the NATO Alliance.

The EU is another close associate of the OSCE. "On a political level, at OSCE meetings, the national delegation of the member State holding the Presidency of the EU ... speaks on behalf of all the states that make up the EU."⁶⁹

Equal human rights are an element of the EU membership process.

The political conditions for membership were most clearly set out in the Copenhagen criteria: 'Membership requires that the candidate country has achieved stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for a protection of minorities, the existence of a functioning market economy as well as the capacity to cope with competitive pressure and market forces within the Union.'⁷⁰

CONCLUSION

It appears the Baltics will achieve their goals of NATO, the EU and OSCE membership by 2004. One of the prerequisites for NATO membership is that aspirants continue to develop along the lines of their MAP chapters.⁷¹ The Baltics must continue what they started in 1990 in their quest for independence. They must continue to develop their free markets and their militaries for roles in both NATO and EU forces. Economic growth remains essential. Increased cooperation between the Baltic States, their Nordic neighbors and bordering countries such as Poland and Belarus helps support their democratization.

Just as this last ten years have not been easy for the Baltics, their future remains somewhat uncertain. Each country has its own domestic issues; all must continue to work together to deal with common problems. For example, Lithuania's dependence on nuclear power will become a critical issue in 2005, when it has agreed as part of joining the EU that it would shut down one of its nuclear reactor towers. The two nuclear towers currently in operation are from the Soviet era, designed much like to the Chernobyl reactor. They are not in any better condition. Loss of nuclear energy may lead them to become more heavily reliant on Russia for gas and oil.

As the northeastern European geographic region of the Alliance, the Baltic States are important to its long-term security framework. The Baltic future is tied to the future of NATO in the Euro-Atlantic security environment. One of NATO's original tenets was the collective defense of all its members; this remains true today. However, the world has evolved since NATO's founding, so NATO itself must change to adapt to its new environment, particularly in the global terrorism area. A challenge facing both the Baltic States and NATO is the future cost of continuing to develop new members' militaries. If NATO's forces are going to be effective in the future, they must be interoperable and capable of operating in a combined military environment. Up-front expenditures are needed to assist in closing the capabilities gap that exists between current members and U.S. military forces. This cost could increase because the Alliance may be drawn in to the war on terrorism. Such investment will contribute to a stronger Europe,

increasingly more involved in its collective defense and better able to respond and assist the U.S. outside the European arena.

Just as NATO is enlarging, so is the EU. Each is setting achievable goals so their new members can continue on their paths toward democracy as well as economic stability. "The prospect of European Union membership has served as an enormous incentive to the Baltic States and Poland to implement politically difficult but necessary reforms."⁷² For the Baltics, this will mean eventually integrating ethnic Russian speakers into their societies. This will prove to be the most challenging for Estonia with its large Russian population on its northeastern border with Russia. The question remains whether this population will want Estonian citizenship. Both Estonians and Russians on both sides of their common border have observed the progress that Estonia has made since becoming independent, while Russia is still working toward making such progress. Until Russia is able to make comparable progress, the fear remains that Russia may try to re-occupy their country. Perhaps sharing a common enemy in the war on terrorism may help bring these two countries into a more stable security environment.

The U.S. has had a unique relationship with the Baltic States for more than 50 years; it realizes continued stability of the North-Eastern region of Europe is important to the Baltic States. The Baltic States membership in NATO benefits the U.S. because these are "friends" the U.S. can count on within NATO to understand U.S. idealism and values. The Baltic's cooperative relationship with the U.S., NATO and the EU assists the U.S. in maintaining its influence in Europe politically, militarily and economically. On 13 February 2003, Estonian Prime Minister Kallas was quoted in the Vilnius-Riga-Tallinn City Paper: "I don't want war. Who does:....But I believe we must choose sides. And I believe our side is with the United States."⁷³ The Baltic countries tend to be more pro-Washington than their counterparts in Western Europe, partly because of the U.S. support of their NATO membership aspirations. "Lithuania has already granted Washington rights for U.S. warplanes to fly over Lithuanian airspace if need be, should war break out in Iraq...."⁷⁴ Additionally, as members of both organizations, the Baltic States will further relationships between non-NATO members and non-EU members (for example Finland is not a member of NATO, while Norway is not a member of the EU).

For the Baltics, NATO has been the symbol of security and stability in the Euro-Atlantic region for over fifty years. As such, NATO must continue to remain viable. NATO has proven to be flexible in adapting to changing European situations.

NATO's continued outreach to Partnership for Peace member states has overcome entrenched hostility and historical divisions. Through its unique partnership, NATO remains the only institution that can unite the continent in

security cooperation. NATO remains the indispensable nexus for broadening and deepening Euro-Atlantic security, democracy, free markets, and the rule of law.⁷⁵

Its current enlargement to 26 members will enable it to meet current global changes. Baltic countries' membership in the Alliance will enhance its ability to remain a dynamic and constructive global institution.

The continued growth and stability of the Baltic States will be supported by their membership in both NATO and the EU. Both organizations have contributed to their current success and will continue to do so during the membership process. The Baltic States' strategic location and their cooperative partnerships provide a positive example for similar cooperation among other former Soviet republics.

Word Count: 6,712

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